

perceived that inasmuch as the Phascolotherium possesses forty-eight teeth (four more than the typical number in mammals), and *has* the strongly inflexed angular process, it precisely fulfils the conditions of my argument. In point of fact, however, the number of teeth is an irrelevant consideration. The other question of fact relates to the structure of the Sloth's tooth: when Cuvier speaks of the alternation of substance in the teeth of an Ungulate animal, he obviously refers to that peculiar alternation of vertical plates of enamel, dentine and cement, which the teeth of the typical Ungulates present. A difference of structure in layers parallel to the crown of the tooth, is of course possessed by every Carnivore, and it is this kind of arrangement which the Sloth also presents. I venture to think, therefore, that this objection to my argument is like most of Dr. Falconer's, and to use his own words, "more specious than valid."

I have left untouched many points in Dr. Falconer's essay, not because they cannot be answered, but because I conceive they will answer themselves. Under this category I leave such passages as those at p. 488, the singular bad taste of which will cause Dr. Falconer, in his cooler moments, far more annoyance than they have occasioned to any one else, except his friends. But I cannot pass without more grave comment, the allusion, at p. 477, to the audience which I had the honour to address. Dr. Falconer's apparent ignorance of the nature of the Friday evening audience at the Royal Institution—one which the best men in this country approach gravely and earnestly, knowing as they do that, whatever be the "mixture" of their hearers, there is pretty sure to be among them a fair jury of their peers,—can be his sole excuse for the tone of his remarks.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

- The Ferns of Great Britain, illustrated by J. E. SOWERBY. The Descriptions by C. JOHNSON.* London, Sowerby, 1855. 8vo.
- The Ferns of Great Britain and their Allies.* By ANNE PRATT. London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. 8vo.
- The Fern-Allies, illustrated by J. E. SOWERBY. The Descriptions by C. JOHNSON.* London, Sowerby, 1856. 8vo.
- British Poisonous Plants.* By C. JOHNSON. London, Sowerby, 1856. 12mo.

It has seemed more convenient to notice the above books conjointly, for the first three of them treat upon the same subject. Our pages (xv, 354) have already contained a recommendation of Sowerby's 'Ferns' to the favourable consideration of botanists, and we should not have thought it necessary to record the fact, that its proprietor

has issued an edition with uncoloured plates at a very cheap rate, had it not come to our knowledge that this determination was caused by the publication by the 'Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge' of the book that stands second on the above list. It really does seem to us that a 'religious' Society goes much out of its way when it employs the funds of its subscribers in the issue of books of a secular character, and thus becomes a 'publishing house,' in competition with men who have to gain their bread by their business. But the matter becomes far worse when the book published is such as that before us. Here we have a work illustrated by numerous plates, nearly all the magnified portions of which, with the entire figures of some of the plants, are badly, but certainly copied from the plates contained in Sowerby's work. We have taken some trouble in the examination of this piratical act, and find that of those figures which Sowerby cannot claim, a considerable number are derived from Newman's 'Ferns.' There is not the slightest acknowledgement on the part of the Society, nor of the artist, that such is the origin of these plates; and we are informed that it was only after legal proceedings had been threatened that the Society, with some difficulty, consented to insert the following notice in future copies of their book, and Sowerby obtained payment for the use of his plates:—

"COPY OF NOTICE.—The artist also wishes it to be understood, that he has purchased permission of Mr. J. E. Sowerby, to copy from the work lately published by him, entitled 'The Ferns of Great Britain, Illustrated,' certain details of the plates, including the figure of the rare plant *Gymnogramma leptophylla*."

This notice gives a very faint idea of the extent to which he is indebted to Sowerby, and takes no notice of his appropriations from Newman. We have entered rather fully into this matter, because we believe that neither the authoress nor the leading members of the Society have any idea of the mode in which their "Committee of General Literature" is acting towards authors and publishers. That they should require the threat of legal proceedings to perform an act of common honesty, is more than we can easily believe.

But enough of this. The public benefit by the issue of the cheap edition of Sowerby's 'Ferns.'

The Society's book makes no pretensions to a scientific character, and will probably fulfil the objects of its writer; but it is certainly not a work that we can recommend to persons desiring to acquire any except the most superficial knowledge of the plants.

Messrs. Sowerby and Johnson's 'Fern-Allies' contains 31 plates, and is intended to be a companion to their 'Ferns.' It treats of the *Equisetaceæ*, *Lycopodiaceæ*, *Marsileaceæ* and *Characeæ*. The plates are mostly good; but exception must be made of several of those representing the *Characeæ*, and a few others. That of *Equisetum limosum* is not like either of the forms, or, as Fries thinks them, species, included under that name; it appears to be a combination of the two, such as we have never seen in nature. No figure is given of the typical form of *E. variegatum*. There is a good plate of *E. Moorei*, a plant of which the specific distinctness is doubtful.

We have very slight acquaintance with it, but fancy that it will prove to be a form of the *E. trachyodon* (A. Br.), which is the *E. Mackaii* (Newm.).

The genus *Chara* seems to have been added to this book unadvisedly; for neither the artist nor the describer appears to know much about the plants included in it. Most of the plates are copied from those in 'English Botany,' or its 'Supplement;' but these are not all therefore good, for that of *C. vulgaris*, taken from an early volume of 'Eng. Bot.,' is very poor.

The new plates profess to represent *C. syncarpa* and *C. prolifera*, the other five species described in Mr. Babington's Monograph (A. N. H. ser. 2. vol. v. p. 81) remaining unfigured in any English work. The plate of *C. syncarpa* is tolerable, and might have passed without notice had not a piece of some totally different plant, perhaps *C. polysperma*, been added at the foot. Certainly *C. syncarpa* never has the many-jointed stems there represented. As we do not know from which plant the magnified nucules were taken, their value is greatly reduced. In all probability the two entire nucules were derived from the wrong plant, and the highly magnified piece of stem is similarly erroneous. We must be allowed to doubt the correctness of Mr. Johnson's remark, that *C. syncarpa* is sometimes monœcious.

The other new plate is a fair representation of *C. prolifera*, although the jointed structure of the primary branches is not shown. We may remark, that Mr. Wilson's *C. gracilis* from Llyn Idwell is stated in the above-mentioned Monograph to be *C. syncarpa*, and that authentic specimens now before us confirm that statement. Mr. Johnson therefore must not think that he has disproved the permanency of the monœcious structure in *C. gracilis*.

The 'British Poisonous Plants' deserves our approbation, being good as far as it goes. The 28 plates are transferred from 'English Botany,' and are therefore all, or nearly all, that could be desired. The recent cases of accidental poisoning with the root of Monkshood is the especial cause of its publication. It would have been well if a figure of the root of this plant, and that of the Horse-radish, for which it was mistaken, had been given; for at the season when such mistakes are liable to occur, neither leaves nor flowers exist, and they can only be guarded against by making generally known the differences between the roots.

We hope that this little book will obtain an extensive circulation.

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

June 12, 1855.—W. Yarrell, Esq., in the Chair.

ON A NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS PRION.

BY JOHN GOULD, F.R.S.

Through the kindness of Mr. Yarrell, I have the pleasure of bringing to the Meeting a bird which I conceive to be a new species